1: Metraux E-5 (1934-1935) 1940
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836

try to prostitute themselves to foreign visitors, and their playmates act as go-betweens.

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883

Roussel (190, p. 429) speaks with disparagement of the "shameful laziness" of Easter Island girls until they were married. Probably here, as in Mangareva, young people of both sexes lived an easy life until they had to support a family. In the seclusion houses they probably spent their days lying on the ground, composing songs, telling stories, discussing their dreams. Some young men engaged themselves as workmen for a salary consisting of one or two rats and a few sweet potatoes. Others helped the adults to till and plant, but they did not accompany them on fishing parties—probably because they were afraid of spoiling their complexions through exposure to the sun (190, p. 10).

ADOPTION

597

Adoption of children has always been widely practiced on Easter Island. Nothing expresses more strikingly the strength of the old custom than the fact that my informant, Victoria Rapahango, who lived many years with an Englishman and bore him several children, gave one of them to an old Italian with whom she was on friendly terms. It is not known to which relatives or friends the children were given formerly; now they are generally entrusted to the godparents. If the child's new parents can feed him, he is given to them a few days after birth; otherwise, he is given after weaning. The adoptive parents treat the child as if he were their own. Roussel (190, p. 466) observes that " . . . the adopted children were put on the same rank as the legitimate. They were entitled to the same care and the same attentions." This attitude continues today.

The child takes the name of his adoptive parents and inherits from them. Much difficulty has arisen in tracing genealogies because adoptive parents will not permit a distinction to be made between their own and adoptive children. "I have raised him and consequently he is my son" is a statement frequently heard on Easter Island. The blood parents take no interest in the children they have given away; they see them rarely and lavish no particular tenderness upon them.

Sexual License

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The accounts of early travelers indicate that the first reaction of the natives on the arrival of a ship was to barter food and women. By the first half of the nineteenth century Easter Islanders seem to have built up a regular trade with their women (p. 36). However, the small number of women seen by the navigators makes it evident, as Cook suggests, that most of the feminine population had been hidden somewhere (p. 20). Probably fear was one of the main causes for these precautions, but we may assume that the same sexual freedom was not permitted to all women. Those who were allowed and even

2:Ferdon A-5 (1956) 1957
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scribed by Jorge as follows: the father is the head *(mayor)* of the family while the first born son is the head of the children, thus the father and the first born son must stand in special relationship to one another and to the total family.

ADOLESCENCE

There are no formal puberty rites existing on the island today, but the period at which a boy is said to become a man is reasonably well fixed in the minds of the people. According to Jorge and Roberto, in earlier days a boy did not become a man, nor did he do a man's work, until he reached the age of twenty, his time being occupied until then in play and fun. Today, however, most native children go to the Chilean-run school from the ages of nine until twelve, after which the boys, at least, are expected to start doing some work. Thus, when Juan Atan's wife became ill and he was unable to come to work, he sent his thirteen year old son to take his place. Although doing a full day's work at a man's job, this youth was consistently referred to as a *poki*, or boy. Some indication of when he would be regarded as a man was presented on the job one day. My workmen caught the boy examining one of the many pictographs at Orongo called *komari*, which stylistically depict a vulva. The men immediately began to joke him terrifically, and during the joking Jorge turned to me and remarked, "He will be ready for that in another two years." From this, it would appear that fifteen years of age may be taken as the approximate age for a young man to enter into mature sex relations and, in general, become a man.

Further evidence along this line was brought forward during a discussion of who could, or could not, vote in the election of the three natives who stand as representatives of the people before the governor of the island. Among the natives there was no fixed age at which a person could vote, the consistent theme being that one could vote when one became a man. Asked if the Atan youth could vote, they informed me that he could not as he was still a *poki*. It was only after considerable questioning and discussion that my workers came to the conclusion that a person of approximately fifteen or sixteen years of age had reached the age of manhood and had the right to vote. An approximately similar age for womanhood appears to hold for girls, as well. At least a search of the government population records showed the earliest age for the marriage of girls was fifteen.

COURTING

Unmarried girls from about fourteen or fifteen onward are given complete sexual freedom which does not begin and end with a possible suitor but is maintained with any passing boy friend. Such relationships are taken quite as casually

2:Ferdon A-5 (1956) 1957
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may constitute an innovation. However, it is so typically Rapa-nui in character, even including the interchange of food by the two families involved, that, if it is not old, it certainly represents a change from within the indigenous cultural pattern. That this feast is now breaking down and being supplanted by a European-like party is indicated by Jorge Tepano's plans for the celebration of the birth of a first child to one of his sons. However, the exchange feature continues, although gifts other than food are now beginning to be used.

Of perhaps greater significance is the change being wrought by the local government school, not only via the forced introduction of Spanish, mathematics, and the like, but, indirectly, on the life habits of the adolescent. Not only are the initiation rites of puberty no longer carried out — nor have they been for some time — but the ancient attitude that young men up to the age of marriage should devote their time to pleasurable living has undergone a noticeable modification. It is possible that in this we have an influence from Chile, in that on the continent, which natives have been allowed to visit from time to time, a boy completes his education and goes to work. Although the age for such activity in Chile may be a bit later than on Easter Island, owing to more extensive education, the fact that the island's schooling is completed for a boy at age thirteen may account for the islander's new attitude that this period marks the beginning of work for their youth.

Having noted some of the more important acculturation changes in the life cycle of the Easter Islander, we may now turn briefly to some of the correspondences with ancient custom as determined from Métraux's attempted reconstruction of the culture of the past.

Although the *umu* feast on the third or fifth month of pregnancy appears to have been dropped, the *umu* at the birth of a first child, with its rite of first food for the mother, continues.[12] Whereas the adolescent no longer goes through a puberty rite, and must now engage in a certain amount of work, his earlier freedom of sex life continues unabated. Marriage, including the gift exchange and marriage feast, continues substantially as Métraux described it for the past,[13] except for the inclusion of church ritual and an unexplained, though minor, change in the manner of exhibiting the exchanged gifts. Here Métraux describes a conical framework of poles upon which the items were exhibited, while during my stay on the island I heard numerous references to the gifts being displayed in such a way that they formed a boat.[14]

Of special interest is the continued existence of the *tumu* grouping of lineages,

12 *Idem*, pp. 101, 103.
13 *Idem*, p. 111.
14 *Loc. cit.*